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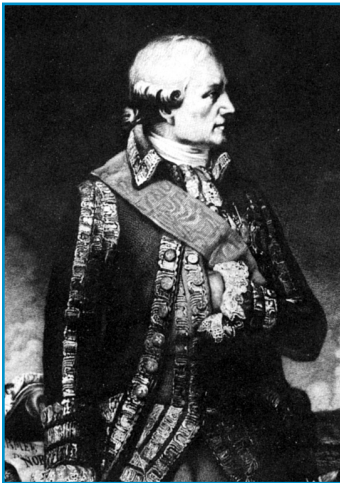
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Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route *News*

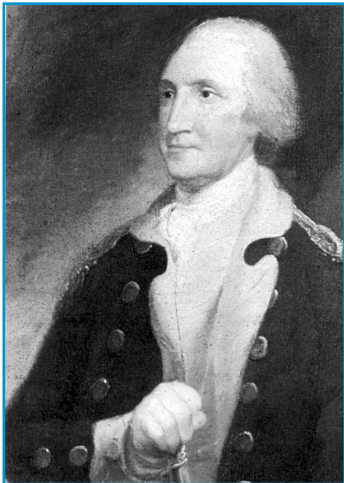
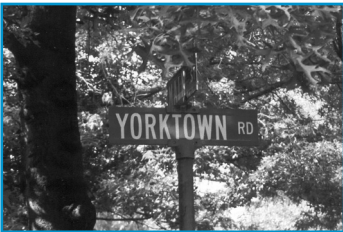
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Rochambeau, artist unknown
Brown University Library



The Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route is memorialized in road names and signs, as in these examples from New Jersey, Maryland and Virginia.



Washington, by Robert Edge Pine
Independence National Historical Park

Study Team

The study team is composed of planners from the Northeast Region of the National Park Service, the National Capital Region of the NPS, the planning firm of Goody, Clancy & Associates, historian Dr. Robert Selig, and the environmental and engineering firm of Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc.

Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route *News*

FALL 2003

Dear Friends,

On behalf of our study team, I am pleased to offer you this newsletter about the National Park Service's Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route study. As we inform you of the progress of our study, we invite you to share the news with your friends and constituencies. We applaud your local and regional efforts to celebrate this important part of our national history, and we welcome your thoughts and comments on this study. For more information, please visit our website at www.nps.gov/boso/w-r or contact Vicki Sandstead at the National Park Service, Boston office: (617) 223-5224 or Vicki_Sandstead@nps.gov.

Sincerely,

Lawrence Gall

Lawrence Gall
Deputy Associate Regional Director
Planning and Partnerships
National Park Service Northeast Region



Statue of Rochambeau in Newport Harbor, Rhode Island.



Plaque of French campsite in Suffern, New York.



House on the Lebanon Green, Connecticut, adjoining Lauzun's Legion winter quarters of 1780 - 81.



Fort Mifflin in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Project Overview

The study we are conducting was authorized by the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Heritage Act of 2000 (PL 106-473). The act directs the National Park Service, through the Secretary of the Interior, to submit to Congress a study of the 600-mile route followed in 1781 and 1782 by American and French armies under generals George Washington and comte de Rochambeau on their way to and from the siege and victory of Yorktown. The march to Yorktown and the return march the following year goes through nine states and the District of Columbia: Rhode Island,

Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia and Massachusetts. The legislation was introduced in the House by Representative John Larson (CT), in the Senate by Senator Joseph Lieberman (CT), and was cosponsored by 42 Congressmen and women, including seven outside the project area. The study is undertaken in consultation with state and local preservation groups, state historic preservation offices, national heritage organizations, and public agencies at the federal, state and local levels.

The purpose and scope of the study are to:

- Determine the eligibility, feasibility and desirability of designating the Washington-Rochambeau Route a National Historic Trail.
- Identify the range of resources and themes associated with the route.
- Identify alternatives for the National Park Service's involvement with the route's preservation and interpretation.
- Provide cost estimates for any development, interpretation, operation, and maintenance associated with the alternatives presented in the study.

Overall Project Schedule

We have researched the historical narrative of the events and the path of the route, inventoried many of its resources, conducted public outreach, and documented the national significance and historic use of the route. We are in the process of developing management alternatives and will be seeking input from the public to refine them. During 2004, we will produce the Study combined with an Environmental Impact Statement (Study/EIS) that assesses the probable impact of each alternative on the natural and socio-economic environments. Public meetings will be held on the draft report and a public comment period will allow further public input. The final Study/EIS is scheduled to be submitted to Congress by October 2004, with a record of the decision released in December of that year.

What’s Been Done

2001

- Project framework established.
- Historical research and narrative begun.
- Resource inventory begun.

2002

Fall - [Route reconnaissance in Rhode Island, Connecticut and New York.](#)

Stakeholder meetings:

Historic Newport, RI; Lebanon Historical Society, CT; Huntington House, CT; Lower Hudson Conference, NY; National Maritime Historical Society, NY;



Meeting of the Delaware W3R Committee, Robinson House, Claymont, DE, August 2003.

National Conference of State Historical Preservation Officers; Sons of the American Revolution; Daughters of the American Revolution; Society of the Cincinnati; Souvenir Français; Expédition Particulière; French Embassy; W3R Committees of several states; Washington’s Estate at Mount Vernon.

June - [Scholars’ Symposium at West Point. Papers on the Washington-Rochambeau Route presented by:](#) General Gilbert Forray, retired Chief of Army Staff, French Army, France; René Chartrand, author and former curator, National Historic Sites, Canada; Dr. Harry Dickinson, Professor of British History, University of Edinburgh, Scotland; Dr. Sarah Purcell, Department of History, Grinnell College, Iowa.

Public meetings:

Hartford, CT - March 14, 2002
Trenton, NJ - March 16, 2002
Yorktown, VA - March 18, 2002

November - [Draft Statement of National Significance Report submitted to National Park Service, Washington, DC.](#)

2003

January 30 - [Statement of National Significance Report submitted to the NPS Advisory Board.](#)

February 6 - 1778 French-American Alliance commemorated in Hartford, CT. (Commemorations occurred at the same time in other US cities and towns and in Paris.)

April 8 - [Landmarks Committee of the NPS Advisory Board meeting, Alexandria, VA.](#)

The Committee recognized the well-researched work that went into the report and voted that the Washington-Rochambeau Route has national significance at the level of the study.

June 10-11 - [National Advisory Board meeting, Cuyahoga, OH.](#) The Advisory Board had a very positive response to the statement of national significance and gave it conceptual acknowledgment.

June, August - [Route reconnaissance through New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia.](#)

Meetings with stakeholders and potential partners:
Fort Mifflin
Delaware W3R Committee, Mount Vernon
Historic Elk Landing Foundation,
American Battlefield Protection Program,
Prince William County, VA
Yorktown NHP, Gloucester Historical Society.

Next Steps in the Plan

2003

October 10-12 - Meeting of 10 state delegations of W3R Committees in Delaware.

Mid October - Congressional briefing on Washington-Rochambeau Route, Washington, DC.

Late fall - Public input on designation and management alternatives, solicited by a second newsletter.

2004

January - March - Study and Environmental Impact Statement Report (Study/EIS) conducted and written, incorporating comments from public meetings, consultation, and other outreach.

April - Draft Study/EIS submitted.

June - Public meetings on the Draft Study and EIS.

July - September - Public feedback, consultation and comments incorporated.

October - Final Study/EIS submitted.

December - Record Of Decision.

Preliminary Management Alternatives

The Washington-Rochambeau study is subject to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review process. This planning and evaluation process mandates that different alternatives for action be considered, including a No Action alternative, in order to compare the impacts of each alternative on the natural and socio-economic environment of the project area. The process includes opportunities for public input at every stage.

This phase of our planning work will develop management alternatives for making the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route a national resource available for educational, interpretive, and other visitor experiences. If the route should be designated by Congress a National Historic Trail, a detailed management plan would be prepared. At the level of our study, however, we are considering certain overarching questions about how, by whom and under what conditions the route could be administered; in other words, alternatives for the designation and administration of the proposed route.

Defining the range of designation and management alternatives has just begun. Below is a summary of some very preliminary alternatives under discussion.



French troops camped near Princeton University’s main quad.

Alternative 1: No Action

Federal involvement is limited to technical assistance as allowed under existing law. State and local groups continue their independent efforts to commemorate the Route.

- States complete resource studies.
- Local signage is added in some route locations.

Alternative 2: Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route National Historic Trail

With federal designation, the story of the march is told consistently along the marked historic route; state and local efforts are supported to achieve improved resource protection, commemoration, and interpretation; educational resources are linked by a website.

- A nonprofit trail association is formed to partner with the NPS to manage the NHT.
- Consistent signage and interpretation is established along the route.
- Sites and resources that are designated trail components are eligible for federal technical and financial support.

Alternative 3: Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route Commemorative Partnership

The story of the march is told consistently along the marked historic route and linked to larger network of thematically related American Revolution sites and resources. State and local efforts are supported to achieve improved resource protection, commemoration, and interpretation; web and educational resources are highly developed.



The Shannon Hotel in Christiana, Delaware hosted the generals and many of the officers on the Washington-Rochambeau Route.

- A new public-private commemorative partnership organization is formed to collaborate with the NPS on preserving and interpreting the route and its resources.
- Consistent signage relating to the Route and other network resources is established.

All of the alternatives seek to accomplish a range of goals related to the route. Some of these objectives include making the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route’s history and resources accessible to a wide variety of visitors, identifying realistic sources of funding for the route’s administration and management, leveraging existing partners and historic resources to enhance the route, distributing information relating to the route, and other activities.

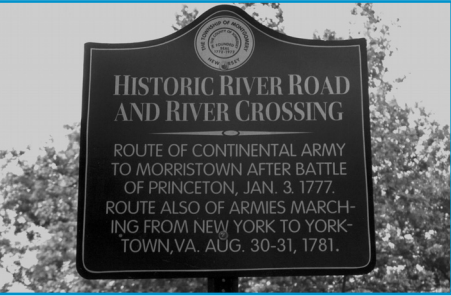
The second newsletter will present more detailed information about alternatives and solicit your opinions, views, and comments about the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route.

Historic Use of the Route

A network of roads traversed colonial America, some used for centuries by Native Americans. These roads, the economic lifelines of the colonies came to be known variably as “Post Road,” “King’s Highway” or “Old Trail” and were used for multiple purposes such as travel, trade, and military campaigns. The roads that constitute the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route predate the war. After the outbreak of war, the armies took these roads during their operations. Their use as conduits for the deployment of the opposing forces was well established before the French and American armies took them in 1781 and 1782.

The route consists of sections of varying lengths of these colonial roads, such as the Boston Post Road in Connecticut, the Albany Post Road in New York, the Assunpink Trail in New Jersey, and the King’s Highway in Delaware. These roads are interspersed with mountainous passes such as the Clove in Suffern, New York, and the crossing over the Susquehanna at Bald Friar Ferry and Ford in Maryland. When strung together, they formed the fastest and most convenient way to reach Williamsburg in 1781.

Based on original documents, the historic locations of the land and water routes that form the Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route can be identified with accuracy and detail on a modern map. The roads that formed the French route were surveyed by Louis Alexandre de Berthier following the march. On the American side, Washington’s cartographer Robert



Historic Crossing over the Delaware and Raritan Canal near Rocky Hill, New Jersey.



The hussars of Lauzun’s legion took this route along present Route 14 in Virginia on their way to Gloucester.

Erskine surveyed the roads in New York and New Jersey during the 1770s. The roads south from Philadelphia to Yorktown were surveyed in 1781 by Simon DeWitt, Erskine’s successor, by order of Washington, to facilitate the march to Yorktown.

Except for a short section (Trenton, New Jersey, through Philadelphia and Delaware to Head of Elk, Maryland) the route consists of multiple routes. Military needs determined the route taken by Lauzun’s Legion in Connecticut in June and that of Continental Army units through New Jersey in August of 1781. The logistics of providing thousands of men with food, firewood and shelter made it necessary for the units to follow different routes. The empty and slow-moving wagon train took a land route from Annapolis to Williamsburg, while the infantry and artillery boarded ships in Elkton, Baltimore and Annapolis.

What Remains Today

The Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route survives in the names of local places, such as French Hill and Hussars Place, and of towns along the route such as Crompond, New York, renamed Yorktown Heights. It can also be found in the extant houses where French and American officers stayed and in the campsites for the enlisted men. It survives in historical markers and commemorative events along the route.

Though the route is diverse, it is clearly discernible in a multitude of modern manifestations. Many, if not all, of these roads still exist under different names and in different conditions, ranging from six-lane interstate highways to abandoned road segments. Whether in eastern Connecticut along country roads flanked by eighteenth-century stone walls or through rural Virginia, one can see this historic route. On other sections of the route, e.g., through cities or industrial areas, 200 years of economic development have all but obliterated the route. But even there, memorials keep alive the awareness of historic ground or trail. In some states, such as Virginia, the marking is consistent and highly visible. Some other states, such as Connecticut, are engaged in re-marking the trail.

The inventory of resources for the purposes of the Washington-Rochambeau study is organized into five broad categories of sites and structures of interest:

- Road Segments
- Campsites
- Associated Sites
- Buildings and Structures
- Commemorative Monuments and Signs

Road segments and campsites are the most significant resources of the route, as they directly relate to the march, but in some cases they are revealed only by commemorative monuments and signs and in many cases may best be interpreted through associated sites and historic buildings.

Historical Summary

The first step in our study was to research the historic events, location and use of the Washington-Rochambeau Route. Below is a short summary of the historical narrative.

With covert aid of weapons and funding, France had been supporting the American colonies’ rebellion against the British since 1775. It was the first nation to recognize the United States after the Declaration of Independence in 1776. After both nations signed an official French-American Alliance in 1778, French army and navy troops sailed to the States to help the Continental Army in its armed struggle. In 1780, France sent an army that was to stay on American soil beyond a military campaign season: the expédition particulière, made up of four regiments of infantry, a unit of cavalry, and field and siege artillery, under the command of general Jean Baptiste Donatien de Vimeur, comte de Rochambeau, was to join forces with the American troops under General George Washington and defeat the British in a decisive engagement.

In July of 1780, Rochambeau sailed into Newport, Rhode Island, with 5,800 officers and men. The bulk of the army wintered in Newport, and started its military campaign the following spring. The French troops marched through Rhode Island, Connecticut and New York, where they met with General George Washington’s 5,000-man Continental Army. They contemplated attacking the British army and navy occupying New York under General Henry Clinton. Upon learning that a large French fleet under the command of Admiral De Grasse was sailing to the Chesapeake to join the campaign, the allied generals then marched their armies south. Washington left half of the Continental Army in New York to keep watch over Clinton. The American and French troops then marched rapidly through New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware, and took several land and water routes through Maryland and Virginia, to



The Washington - Rochambeau Revolutionary Route, with the addition of French naval routes, and British army and navy movements.

meet at Yorktown. General Charles Cornwallis had stationed a British army of 9,000 men in the fortified town and was waiting for orders or reinforcements from Clinton. The Battle of the Capes dispersed the British fleet from Chesapeake Bay and sealed off Cornwallis from either escape or reinforcements. The French and American armies laid siege to the British troops and

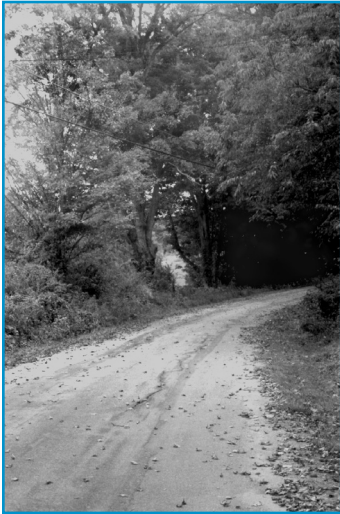
forced them to surrender on October 19, 1781, in one of the most decisive victories of the War for American Independence.

The original 2,500 American troops that had left New York in August had been joined along the way by other Continental regiments and militia units. DeGrasse’s fleet had brought additional French troops under Saint-Simon, so that

the French and American Allied land forces at Yorktown totaled 18,400 officers and men. Together with 8,000 British prisoners (1,000 had died during the siege), such a large force could not be sustained in rural Virginia. As soon as the battle was over, DeGrasse sailed to the Caribbean with his own large naval force and Saint-Simon's troops, and the Continental Army

marched north to different winter encampments in Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York. Rochambeau's army wintered in and around Williamsburg for another eight months. In July of 1782, Rochambeau's infantry began its march north to Boston, using many of the same campsites that were established on the march to Yorktown. In towns and villages

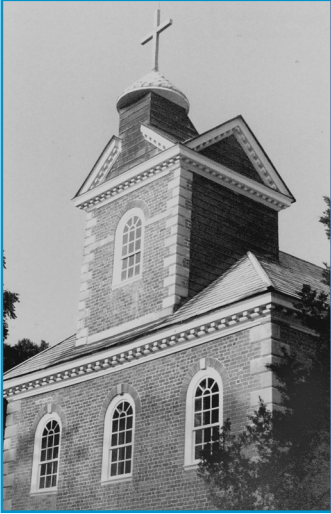
along the way, Americans thankful for their role at Yorktown greeted the French troops with celebrations. From Yorktown Heights, the French Cavalry rode to Wilmington, Delaware to winter there in 1782 and returned to France the following year. On December 25, 1782, Rochambeau's infantry sailed out of Boston for the Caribbean.



Intact road segment along Route 6 in eastern Connecticut.



Scott's Plantation campsite in Maryland.



The Aguia Church in Virginia.

Study Findings

National Historic Trail Criteria

Although the study authorization was not structured as a proposed National Historic Trail (NHT) under the National Trails System Act 1(16 USC 1241 et seq.), our study applies the criteria of the Act to determine the feasibility and desirability of designation as one alternative for NPS involvement. To qualify for designation as an NHT the route must meet three criteria:

- **Historic use.** It must be a trail or route established by historic use and be historically significant as a result of that use.
- **National significance.** It must be of national significance with respect to any of several broad facets of American history, such as trade and commerce, exploration, migration and settlement, or military campaigns.

- **Potential for recreation and interpretation.** It must have significant potential for public recreational use or historical interest based on historic interpretation and appreciation.

If the NPS determines that the route meets these criteria, Congress could designate it a National Historic Trail. The designation could enable the NPS to support groups, projects and activities associated with the Trail's preservation and interpretation. Our report *Statement of National Significance*, accepted by the NPS Advisory Board, documents the first and second of the three NHT criteria. [The report can be viewed at www.nps.gov/boso/w-r]

Through our research, discussions at the scholars' symposium, and comments from stakeholders as well as historians, we developed the following two overarching

statements for why the route is nationally significant, each with four sub-themes.

I The Washington-Rochambeau Route is of national significance as a domestic cross-cultural experience.

The Route is significant as:

- an indispensable component of the campaign of 1781: it is the route that took the combined Franco-American armies to victory;
- a watershed in the development of an American identity: in 1781-82, the thirteen colonies took a gigantic step toward becoming a nation;
- a prime illustration of the American Revolutionary War as a truly diverse effort; and
- a visible expression of the hope for independence and the gratitude that greeted the returning French army on its march north in 1782.

II The Washington-Rochambeau Route is of national significance as a manifestation of the international war effort.

The Route is significant as:

- an expression of the global character of the American War for Independence;
- the culmination of the crucial contributions of France to the achievement of American Independence;
- an example of joint Franco-American cooperation under Washington's overall leadership; and
- the first true acknowledgement of the United States as a sovereign nation.

National Historic Landmark Criteria

In addition to applying criteria of the National Trails System Act, we presented how the Route meets five of the six National Historic Landmark (NHL) Criteria for national significance. (Criterion 4 does not apply)

NHL Criterion 1: events that represent broad national patterns of US history.

- The Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route is an indispensable component of the Yorktown Campaign because it is the route that took the combined Franco-American armies to victory; it commemorates the crucial role of France in that victory and of 225 years of Franco-American friendship.
- The Washington-Rochambeau Route is a manifestation of an international war effort at the time of the American War for Independence.
- It links and helps define the development of the United States as a community, as the thirteen colonies made a gigantic step toward becoming a nation.
- It expresses the gratitude that greeted the returning French army on its march north in the summer of 1782, reflecting the crucial contributions of France toward the achievement of American independence.

NHL Criterion 2: associated importantly with nationally significant persons.

- The Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route is the example of joint Franco-American cooperation



Washington and Rochambeau ferried over the Occoquan River at this landing on their way to Fredericksburg in Virginia.

- under the overall leadership of General George Washington.
- It is also associated with comte de Rochambeau, Henry Knox, the duc de Lauzun, Alexander Hamilton, Admiral de Grasse, Colonel Lamb, comte de Deux-Ponts, Baron Steuben, the marquis de Lafayette, and Lord Cornwallis.

NHL Criterion 3: represents ideas or ideals.

- The Washington-Rochambeau Revolutionary Route is an expression of the hope for independence rekindled in Patriot hearts with the mobilization of the French forces.
- The union of French and Continental armies is among the first acknowledgments of America as a sovereign nation.
- As a domestic cross-cultural experience, it is a pivotal event in the development of an American identity because our encounter with Frenchmen served as vivid reminders of who we were and were not.

NHL Criterion 5: illustrates a way of life or culture.

- Training and expertise provided by French advisers and volunteers helped shape the Continental Army and its successor, the United States Army, into a skilled, professional fighting force.
- French influence remained strong in the US military long after the end of the conflict. Even today, the US Army Corps of Engineers awards the Fleury Medal for

excellence in engineering, while the coat of arms and the motto of the US Army Engineering School are that of the French military engineering school at Mezières: Essayons! Let us try!

NHL Criterion 6: likely to yield information.

- Winter quarters, and campsites where the armies stayed for extended times, are likely to yield valuable information for understanding the everyday life and influences upon the French and the Continental soldier, as well as the communities nearby that served the needs of the marching armies.



Monument to French soldiers in Annapolis, Maryland.